

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 STR-04 FEA-01 AGRE-00 CEA-01

CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 FRB-01 H-02 INR-07 INT-05

L-03 LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 AID-05 SS-15

ITC-01 TRSE-00 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02 OMB-01 IO-13

IGA-02 XMB-04 /111 W

-----021733Z 026809 /41

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FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4201

UNCLAS MONROVIA 2230

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, LI

SUBJECT: GSP: FIRST YEAR REVIEW

REF: STATE 67507

1. IN RESPONSE TO GENERAL QUESTIONS POSED IN REFTEL, MEETING HELD WITH

DIRECTOR OF FOREIGN TRADE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, INDUSTRY AND TRANSPORTATION. FEELING OF DIRECTOR THAT GSP PROGRAM TOO YOUNG AND STATISTICAL EVIDENCE TOO SKETCHY TO MAKE DEFINITIVE JUDGEMENTS OF NET ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF GSP IN LIBERIA. HOWEVER, INFORMATION IN FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS WAS OFFERED BY DIRECTOR ON BASIS OF PRELIMINARY DATA AND EXPERIENCE, AND PERSONAL UNDERSTANDING OF EXPORTERS' MOTIVATION.

2. DIRECTOR EXPRESSED OPINION THAT GSP IS DEFINITELY BENEFICIAL TO LIBERIA, BUT DIFFICULT TO QUANTIFY AT THIS STAGE. STATISTICAL EXPORT DATA FOR 1976 WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE FOR SEVERAL MONTHS, AND, EVEN THEN, WILL CALL FOR CONSIDERABLE ANALYSIS TO DETERMINE IF GSP HAD SIGNIFICANT IMPACT. CANNOT BE DETERMINED AT THIS POINT IF LIBERIAN EXPORTS TO U.S. HAVE INCREASED.

3. NEW INVESTMENTS ARE BEING PLANNED OR ARE UNDER WAY WHICH UNCLASSIFIED

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CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF GSP. CLEAR EXAMPLES ARE THOSE WITHIN THE TIMBER PRODUCTS INDUSTRY WHICH IS OF GROWING IMPORTANCE TO LIBERIAN ECONOMY. AGAIN, HOWEVER, WHAT FACTOR GSP PLAYED DURING INVESTMENT DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IS NOT KNOWN. IT WAS EXPRESSED THAT GSP ALONE COULD PROBABLY NOT BE CONSIDERED A DETERMINING FACTOR IN PROMPTING NEW INVESTMENT, BUT IS DEFINITELY AN ENCOURAGEMENT.

4. PRELIMINARY DATA DO NOT SUGGEST THAT ANY SIGNIFICANT VOLUME OF "NON-TRADITIONAL" PRODUCTS EXPORTED AS A RESULT OF GSP.

5. GOL SPONSORED SEMINAR IN LATE 1976 TO EXPLAIN AND PROMOTE ADVANTAGE OF GSP TO BUSINESS COMMUNITY. CONCEPT APPARENTLY WIDELY UNDERSTOOD AND ACCEPTED AMONG LIBERIAN FIRMS AND CONCESSIONS, AND QUESTIONS CENTERED ON TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF PAPER WORK INVOLVED, GOL RECENTLY EXPERIENCED DIFFICULTY WITH ACCEPTABILITY OF THEIR LOCALLY PRINTED GSP CERTIFICATE OF ORIGIN FORM A, BUT PROBLEM RESOLVED THROUGH ASSISTANCE OF EMBASSY COMMERCIAL SECTION.

6. EFFECT WHICH GSP HAS HAD IN TRADE PATTERNS BETWEEN U.S. AND LIBERIA IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ASSESS WITHOUT STATISTICAL DATA, BUT NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGES SENSED BY GOL DIRECTOR OF FOREIGN TRADE.

7. DIRECTOR NOTED THAT SINCE EEC COUNTRIES IN TOTAL IMPORT A LARGER SHARE OF LIBERIA'S PRODUCT THAN DOES U.S., LOME AGREEMENT PROBABLY HAS GREATER SIGNIFICANCE FOR LIBERIA THAN DOES GSP. CLOSER SCRUTINY OF INDIVIDUAL TRADE PATTERNS AND TRENDS AND PRODUCT SHIPMENTS NECESSARY TO DETERMINE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF TRADE CONCESSIONS FOR LIBERIA.
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